



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

## PAINTING ON TAPESTRY.

BY ROBERT ROBERTS.



THIS beautiful industry is only two or three years old, but has steadily gained in public favor. It is justly claimed to be truly American, although much of the work is done by foreign artists. The perfect touch of artistic skill is necessary. It has made remarkable progress, but is not yet much known among the majority. To paint tapestries properly requires great care and deftness, much more than painting on canvas. If you put too much paint on canvas, it can easily be painted over; not so with tapestry, as too much spoils it. Exactness in every touch is needed.

The American School of Art and Tapestry Co., 286 Fifth avenue, New York, was the first to introduce painting on tapestry in this country, and the only one in existence at the present time. Artists who paint well on canvas may not be able to paint well on tapestry. Adaptability for the work is essential, as also years of careful study, before satisfactory results are produced. In the first

work done here in tapestries, dyes were used, but few appreciated this method which is dull and lifeless. The finished work has a blank look. Dyes do not produce good results, a great contrast to the flesh-like tints given in oils. In oils you can work out the high lights, and give all the lovely effects of dainty flesh modeling, but not with dyes. Oils are lasting and will not fade, dyes are not durable, and fade in a short time.

The interest in tapestries was not revived until dealers brought imported woven ones and exhibited them here, they were bought and used as panels, screens, coverings for furniture and extensively for wall decorations and curtains.

Wool, silk and linen are the materials used for this work; they are especially woven with a ribbed surface to represent the Gobelin tapestries. The most superior fabric is wool, and the fleecy softness of the finished work is very beautiful. One piece seen at the American School of Art and Tapestry Co. is a chair covered with what one would suppose woven tapestry; this was painted several years ago, and has been in daily use since, thus proving its durability, as its colors are as bright as new. Mr. Douthitt, with the purpose of finding the best decoration for American homes, made a tour of the world, collecting designs wherever superior ones could be found. This gentleman's excellent good taste and thorough knowledge of this, his chosen occupation, made him capable of gleaming the best that each place afforded, enriching his mind with the study of tapestries in palaces and old castles.

He has done much to bring tapestry painting into public favor in America. This exquisite art is peculiar to the higher order of artistic genius, in order to understandingly use the best results of the famous artists and reproduce them on tapestry.

At the American School of Art and Tapestry Co., twenty-three foreign artists are busy all through the year, also a great number at the houses they are decorating. In an elegant house in this city is one of the first tapestry ceilings put up in this country. It was done under the supervision of Mr. Douthitt and Mme. Blanchard, the painting being done at the company's rooms on Fifth avenue. Walls and ceilings done in tapestry have a great advantage over any other mode of decoration. They are not injured by dampness or cracking. They do not chip off, but can be fastened tightly by means of screws, and adjusted to suit any settling of the walls. Instead of spending \$300 or \$400 for a frescoed ceiling, and having to leave it with the house, in case of change of residence, you can unscrew it and take it with you, as you do your other household goods, and beautify the new house, without extra expense. Always use screws in putting up these ceilings, as the law obliges a tenant to leave everything that has had a nail driven into it.

A tapestry ceiling costs from \$200 to \$500, according to treatment and size, but this first cost is the only one, as it does not have to be annually renewed. Mr. Douthitt makes a specialty of interior decoration, whether tapestry is wanted or

not. He also has a full and rich supply of all materials used in tapestry painting, as well as the fine wool and other fabrics in all widths. Tapestries are principally used for wall panels and ceilings, excelling any known mode of fresco, no matter how thoroughly done, and are less expensive, as no one can prevent the cracking of plaster, occasioned by the settling of the house, neither can they successfully exclude the dampness that will surely ruin the most artistic fresco painting. Both these evils are obviated by the use of tapestry, as it neither molds nor cracks. Chicago, Philadelphia and many other of the largest cities are awakening to the advantage of this new and beautiful decoration for houses, and the demand for tapestry and this special line of interior decoration is constant and increasing. In a house near New York City, the reception room side-walls are hung in plush, with panels of exquisitely painted tapestry. The effect is most pleasing.

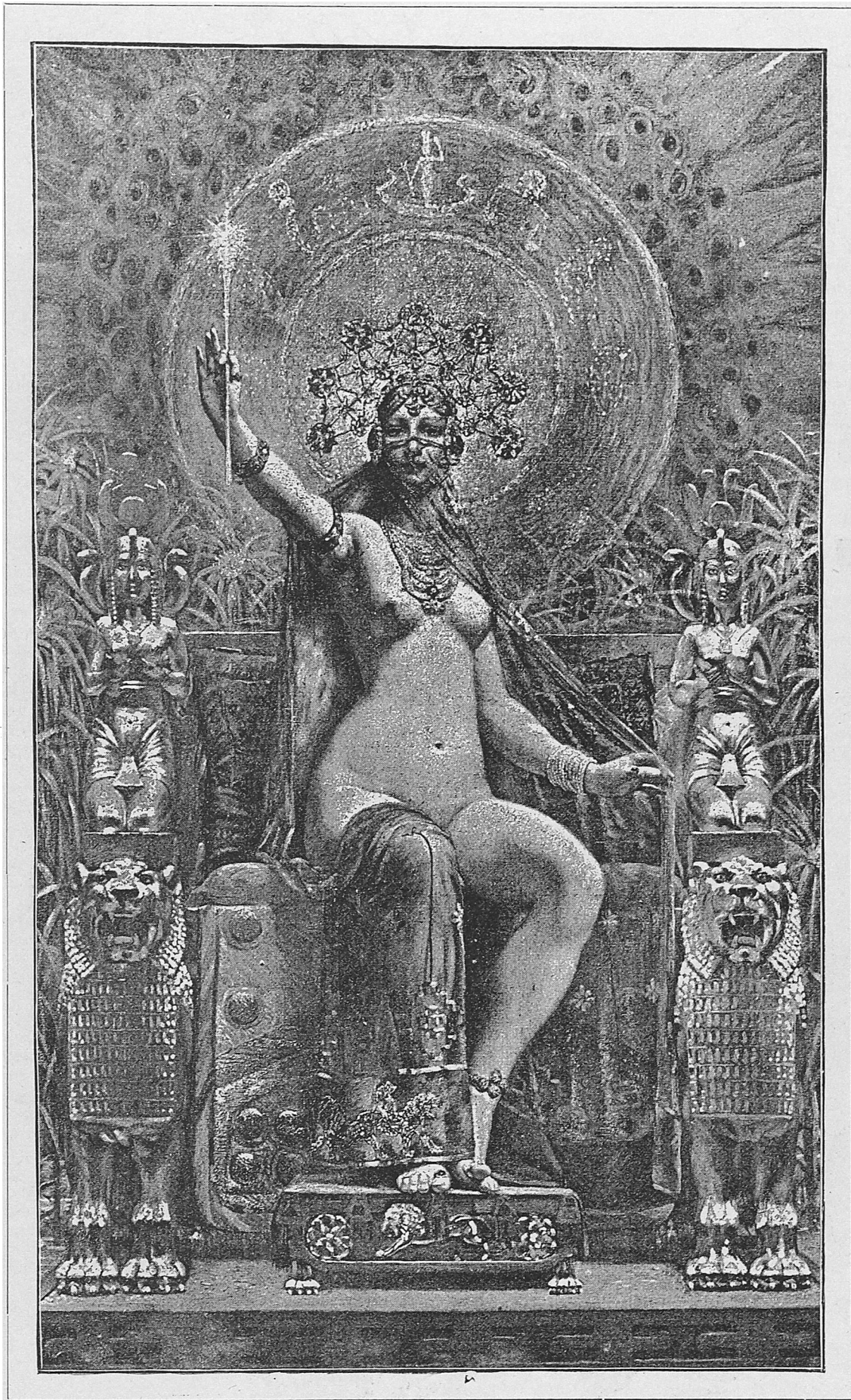
Formerly individual effort was recognized, now all grades of work exists only in combined labor, such as the forming of trust companies, co-operative firms, etc., and this firm follows the spirit of the age by combining the best efforts of many artists on all their paintings on tapestry. One artist does the face, another the draperies, another the background, etc., of each painting for as no one can excel in all, it is only by uniting the best of each, that perfection of effort is accomplished.

It may be well to give a brief sketch of a dining-room in one of our richest homes, decorated by this firm. The wainscoting is done in lignum, the prevailing tone being bird's eye maple. The walls are in terra cotta colored paper, tinged with a metal finish. One large tapestry panel is hung on each side wall, with two smaller ones on either side of it. On all these are tastefully arranged designs of game, fruit and flowers. Each panel is surrounded by handsome oak mouldings. The frieze twenty inches wide has each wall divided into three tapestry panels, the larger being in the center. On these are painted pastoral scenes, with a vast perspective. This frieze gives a marvellous effect to the whole room. It seems not only to separate the ceiling from the side walls, but really elevate it, to a considerable height, and makes the room appear larger. The ceiling is also done in tapestry of rich flower and fruit designs.

The parlor is equally grand, only being in lighter tints, the sky represented in the ceiling more vaporous, showing an atmosphere extremely ethereal, reminding you of a day in June. Flowers and cupids, are grouped most effectively, the cupids holding a wide-spread canopy full of sunshine and soft lights. A handsome tapestry frieze with beautiful panels on most zephyr-like wool tapestry, gives a tone and richness that is a picture-dream of fairy land, or the ideal of a Parisian. At the American Tapestry Company are hundreds of exquisite paintings on tapestry, soft as foam, of great variety of designs and usefulness. There are panels that could well replace some of the oil paintings now in our rich drawing-rooms. There are screens, curtains, fans, shades, etc., etc., all of the most suitable designs for their different uses. It is most gratifying to see a new branch of art so perfectly understood, turned to such lovely, yet practical purpose. The beautifying of one's home is the highest art and the acme of civilization. A call on Mr. Douthitt will repay any one, and they will end their visit with a higher appreciation of the new beauties that may be brought into their homes, no matter how full they are of other art treasures. There is a school in connection with this firm, presided over by A. L. Blanchard, who thoroughly understands the art, and pupils are fitting themselves for teachers, and wealthy ladies are learning to decorate their homes.

Painted tapestries are destined to supersede woven tapestries. The latter is an industrial art which, being done by the fingers, is necessarily *dull, flat and lifeless*; whereas the former is Polite Art, into which enters sentiment, color, harmony, and, above all, life and spirit.

Mr. Douthitt has an artist at work on a beautiful tapestry, an illustration of which we present our readers on the opposite page. The subject is "Circe," which consists of an exquisitely modeled female figure, seated on a throne supported on either side by Assyrian lions, surmounted by kneeling female figures. The goddess wears a diadem of jewels, and her only garment is a transparent veil, which clothes part of the face and figure. The goddess with her left hand holds the veil aside, while in her right hand she bears a torch, the symbol of her own intoxicating beauty, which too often proves an *ignis fatuus* to millions of worshippers. Behind the goddess is a cabalistic aureole with Egyptian hieroglyphics, which is itself surrounded by circles of roses and flashing lights. The subject is one that combines in itself all the possibilities of decoration allied to fine art.



A PAINTED TAPESTRY, EXECUTED BY THE AMERICAN TAPESTRY CO., NEW YORK.  
SUBJECT—"CIRCE."